IN THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Please cancel claims 1-2.

3. (New) An apparatus for introduction into an opening in a wall of a body lumen, comprising:

a sheath having proximal and distal ends and an interior surface defining a first lumen extending between the proximal and distal ends, the distal end having a size and shape for insertion into a body and one or more ports communicating with the first lumen;

an elongate member insertable into the first lumen of the sheath, the elongate member including a distal region configured for sealingly engaging the interior surface of the sheath, the elongate member further including a shaft region extending proximally of the distal region and having an external surface that does not sealingly engage the interior surface of the sheath, thereby defining a first passage between the elongate member and the sheath proximal to the distal region, the first passage communicating with the one or more ports when the elongate member is fully inserted into the sheath.

4. (New) The apparatus of claim 3, wherein the first passage comprises an annular region between the elongate member and the sheath proximal to the distal region of the elongate member.

5. (New) The apparatus of claim 4, wherein the elongate member shaft comprises a generally cylindrical member having a diameter that is less than a diameter of the first lumen of the sheath.

6. (New) The apparatus of claim 3, wherein the elongate member distal region has a contracted state for insertion into the first lumen of the sheath and an enlarged state for sealingly engaging the interior surface of the sheath.

7. (New) The apparatus of claim 6, wherein the elongate member distal region comprises an inflatable balloon.

8. (New) The apparatus of claim 3, wherein the sheath includes a proximal port in fluid communication with the first passage.

9. (New) The apparatus of claim 3, wherein the elongate member includes a handle at a proximal end thereof, the handle adapted to engage the interior surface of the sheath.

10. (New) The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the elongate member handle includes a first engagement member and the interior surface of the sheath includes a second engagement member, and wherein said first and second engagement members

cooperate to substantially secure the elongate member relative to the sheath when the elongate member is fully inserted into the sheath.

11. (New) The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the elongate member handle provides a seal between the elongate member and the interior surface of the sheath.

12. (New) The apparatus of claim 3, further comprising a closure element slidably disposed on an exterior of the sheath, the closure element configured for engaging tissue adjacent the opening for closing the opening.

13. (New) The apparatus of claim 3, further comprising a housing slidably disposed on an exterior of the sheath, the housing configured for releasably holding a closure element, the housing being actuable from a proximal end of the sheath for advancing the closure element distally during deployment of the closure element.

14. (New) A method for positioning an introducer sheath in an opening in a wall of a body passage through an incision in tissue, the introducer sheath including a lumen extending distally from its proximal end and communicating with at least one port in its distal end, the method comprising:

inserting the distal end of the introducer sheath through a patient's skin toward the body passage via the opening;

inserting an elongate member having a distal region into the introducer sheath lumen until a portion of a distal region extends distally of the distal end of the sheath, the distal region of the elongate member sealingly engaging an interior surface of the sheath, the elongate member and the interior surface of the sheath defining a first passage in fluid communication with the at least one port;

positioning the distal end of the sheath with respect to the body passage until the at least one port enters the body passage, whereupon fluid within the body passage enters the first passage through the at least one port, thereby providing a visual indication of depth of insertion of the introducer sheath.

15. (New) The method of claim 14, further comprising viewing the fluid after it has passed through a proximal port on said sheath, the proximal port in fluid communication with the first passage.

16. (New) The method of claim 14, further comprising distally advancing a closure element slidable on the introducer sheath to engage tissue within or adjacent to the opening in the wall of the body passage.

17. (New) The method of claim 16, further comprising distally advancing a housing slidable on the introducer sheath, the housing configured for releasably holding a closure element, the housing being actuable from a proximal end of the introducer sheath for advancing the closure element distally during deployment of the closure element.